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**AIR EXPEDITIONARY FORCE:
THE AIR FORCES' NEW CAPABILITY**

BY

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

Air Expeditionary Force: The Air Forces' New Capability

by

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ABSTRACT

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The National Security Strategy, 1997 Quadrennial Defense Review, National Military Strategy, and Joint Vision 2010 call for certain military capabilities. These capabilities will provide the National Command Authorities (NCA) options when pursuing U.S. interests. While the current Air Force structure is able to fulfill the requirements of these various documents, the Air Force is restructuring itself. The Air Force is reorienting itself to a more expeditionary force. The Air Expeditionary Force (AEF) will provide the NCA a rapid reaction force. The Air Force is beginning to revise its doctrine to incorporate the AEF. Across the spectrum of conflict the AEF is a valuable option for the NCA. The AEF is credible force for the present and the future.

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AEF

With the AEF, the NCA gets a fast reacting force that can attain strategic results. The Air Force has developed a force that with short notice can go faster and farther than any military force in the world... with precision capability!

J.C.Blake

INTRODUCTION

The Air Force is restructuring its basic organization. This new structure is called the Air Expeditionary Force (AEF).¹

Beyond supporting the 1997 Quadrennial Defense Review, the AEF also enhances the tenets of Joint Vision 2010. The AEF provides a fast-reacting task force that can support the geographic Commanders in Chief (CINC's) needs from Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW) to the other end of the spectrum of combat operations, Major Theater War (MTW). In some scenarios the AEF can accomplish these missions as a stand-alone force. The AEF is a new concept that is causing the Air Force to reevaluate its doctrine. The Air Force under the construct of the AEF provides a credible military option to the National Command Authority (NCA). The AEF is a new concept that is relevant today as well as the future.

The National Security Strategy (NSS) provides a framework for the use of all the instruments of power available to the United States. Responding to the NSS, the Secretary of Defense

delineates how the Department of Defense (DOD) will support the NSS in the QDR. The Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJSC), uses the guidance in the QDR to lay out the framework of the National Military Strategy (NMS). Looking to the future, Joint Vision 2010 (JV 2010) provides a template for the services to structure their forces to execute the NMS through the first decade of the new century. All of these documents specify the need for certain military capabilities. While they do not specifically address the individual services, they cite certain competencies that reside only in the Air Force. The Air Force is thus called upon to provide capabilities unique to its service. Certain aspects of these documents are highlighted, specifically those areas that are inherent to the Air Force. With its current structure and doctrine, the Air Force is able to fulfill specific requirements called for in these documents. However, the Air Force is currently undergoing a transformation to the new AEF concept. This concept, combined with emergent doctrine, will enable the Air force to more efficiently accomplish certain tasks that the following directives indicate are essential to the execution of our national strategy.

A NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY FOR A NEW CENTURY

The National Security Strategy provides an overarching theme for the use of U.S. instruments of power. Further, it indicates how these instruments will be used in the accomplishment of national objectives. The cornerstone of U.S. power is its

military. The NSS provides the framework for the military, from which flow all other documents that serve to implement the national strategy. The United States Air Force (USAF) must support the NSS with its unique capabilities and characteristics. The NSS articulates certain objective's some of which require USAF support.

The 1998 NSS sets as core objectives enhanced security, sustained economic prosperity, and promoting democracy abroad. The Air Force is primarily tasked with enhancing U.S. security. The NSS asserts that the current security environment is dynamic and uncertain. The security environment is no longer static as was the case during the Cold War. New threats and challenges are fomenting in unstable regions throughout the world. To protect its interests in an unstable era, the U.S. will depend on alliances, allies, and ad hoc coalitions. However, in certain situations the US must be prepared to act alone to protect its interests or when it is advantageous to do so.²

The NSS categorizes the US interests in descending order as vital, important, and humanitarian or other. Across the spectrum of interests, the military may be used in its various ways to carry out a wide array of missions.

The NSS advocates protecting and advancing U.S. interests by means of a multi-faceted approach of shaping the international environment, responding to threats and crisis, and preparing for an uncertain future. This strategy is commonly referred to as

"shape, respond, and prepare." Each of these strategies relies to some degree on unique military capabilities. The military can be used to help shape the environment. Deterrence may passively shape the environment by contributing to regional stability, or it may actively intimidate a poised force prepared for combat. Deterrence can be used as a signal of U.S. commitment to a country by enhancing our warfighting capability in the theater, such as moving military forces into a theater or adding to existing forces.³ Responding encompasses the spectrum of military operations from humanitarian assistance to Smaller Scale Contingencies (SSC); at the far end of the spectrum an ultimate response may be, Major Theater War. Each potential use of the military requires careful preparation for a broad range of options.

The NSS envisions SSC's across the full range of military options short of MTW, such as humanitarian assistance and peace operations. SSC's will present the most frequent challenge and a significant commitment in the future.⁴

Major Theater War scenarios will involve the full military capabilities of the U.S. The NSS stipulates that the U.S. must remain prepared to engage in two MTW's in distant theaters in overlapping time frames. Prosecution of the MTW is generally based on the following premise; rapidly defeat enemy advances short of their objectives and seize the initiative to minimize lost territory. Further, these forces will be able to disengage

from other requirements to fight another distant MTW.⁵ The DOD is tasked with supporting the NSS of shape, respond, and prepare.

QUADRENNIAL DEFENSE REVIEW (QDR)

The overarching theme of the 1997 QDR envisions a military that is engaged all over the world and operating in a resource-constrained environment. Since 1985, the defense budget has shrunk 38% and force structure has been reduced 33%. The QDR calls for defense spending to remain relatively flat at 250 billion dollars a year for the foreseeable future.⁶ This scenario calls for a military carrying out many tasks, but operating under a very constrained budget.⁷

The QDR flows from the NSS and resonates the shape, prepare, and respond theme. The military must achieve efficiencies by using superior organization and doctrine. The QDR specifies that our 21st century military force will be able to conduct operations using dominant maneuver, precision engagement, full dimension protection, and focused logistics. The QDR emphasizes that our military must trim current forces, particularly in the "tail" (logistics and support structure).⁸

By 2015 the QDR postulates that it is reasonable to assume that more than one regional power will have both the desire and the means to militarily challenge U.S. interests. It envisions the emergence of no "global peer competitors" in the near future that will be able to challenge the U.S. nor are there any regional powers that are likely to come together in an attempt to

defeat the U.S. militarily. These sole-superpower assumptions are predicated on the deterrent value of the full U.S. military potential to be mobilized and deployed to a given region.⁹ The QDR emphasizes the need to deter aggression and coercion and further asserts that it is critical that the U.S. demonstrate the will and ability to uphold our security commitments. U.S. policy communicates U.S. commitments. U.S. deterrence capabilities reside largely in its conventional warfighting capabilities, across the spectrum of operations, in particular is the U.S. capability to rapidly project these forces.¹⁰ The deterrent value of these military operations can be communicated in several guises. The U.S. can signal its resolve by enhancing warfighting capability in a given theater. Concurrent with the deterrent value of in-theater forces is the ability to respond rapidly. The deterrent ability of the military is communicated when readiness levels of current deployed forces are increased or the deployed forces are moved closer to the potential adversary. At the far end of the deterrence spectrum, the U.S. may engage in limited strikes on an adversary whose behavior the U.S. is attempting to influence.¹¹

If deterrence should fail, the U.S. may elect to pursue its objectives with military options. The QDR suggests that swift intervention by military forces may be the best way to contain, resolve or mitigate the consequences of a conflict that could otherwise become far more costly and deadly. The QDR foresees

the US involved in many SSC's. However, if necessary, the military must be able to withdraw quickly, reconstitute, and then deploy to a MTW.¹²

The QDR unequivocally asserts that the military must be able to engage in two nearly simultaneous MTW's. The rationale for this two-MTW scenario is to stop opportunism. For example, a potential aggressor sees the U.S. engaged in an MTW and decides to challenge U.S. interests in a different region of the world. In response, the U.S. with or without allies will rapidly militarily overmatch a potential enemy, in any region of the world. The U.S. will quickly deploy across great distances to supplement forward stationed or deployed forces to rapidly stop aggression. The military must rapidly defeat the enemy short of their objectives, then seize the initiative to minimize loss of territory. The military must be able to accomplish the aforementioned scenario in two distant theaters nearly simultaneously. The capability to rapidly halt the enemy short of his objectives is the cornerstone of the two MTW scenarios. Failure to halt the enemy's invasion rapidly becomes very costly: when the war becomes lengthy and more difficult, coalition support may begin to weaken.¹³

The QDR envisions a capabilities based force that gives the national leadership options. This force will have sufficient size to deter aggression and coercion and, if necessary, to defeat a large conventional force. The Air Force must maintain a

high state of readiness to meet the rapid response requirements for air assets in the initial phase of a SSC or MTW.¹⁴ Our military forces will be organized so they can conduct a full range of operations from shaping the environment to transitioning to MTW. These forces will use a mix of overseas presence and power projection.¹⁵

The QDR tasks the military with a full range of responsibilities to be met under a defense budget that will remain relatively flat for the foreseeable future. The QDR mandates that the military leverage operational innovations to improve capability and resilience. It is essential that the military carefully manage a smaller force while maintaining the ability to sustain overseas engagements.¹⁶ The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff advises that the military must develop tools to manage and assess the strain on its people. We need new management policies to enable the force to deal effectively with the current frenetic operational tempo.¹⁷

NATIONAL MILITARY STRATEGY (NMS)

CJCS designed the 1997 NMS to implement the QDR and NSS. The NMS shows how our armed forces will contribute to the strategic concept of shape, respond, and prepare. The NMS emphasizes our strategic reliance on a demonstrated ability to rapidly respond. Our capability to decisively resolve a crisis provides our most effective deterrent. Further it sets the stage for future operations.¹⁸

The NMS cites our reliance on four basic strategic concepts: strategic agility, overseas presence, power projection, and decisive force. The U.S. military has essentially become a power-projection force. We must maintain the ability to rapidly deploy and sustain our forces. Key to power projection is our ability to assemble and move while continuing to meet specific military requirements. Power projection thus gives the NCA options. Decisive force allows the US military to overwhelm enemy resistance in order to establish more favorable conditions and achieve political objectives. In the early stages of a crisis power projection can greatly facilitate our efforts to deter aggression. In short, our current strategic concepts are predicated on decisive operations.¹⁹

In an MTW scenario, the U.S. must be able to respond quickly, quickly seize the initiative, and halt the enemy. After halting the enemy's initiative, our forces will conduct operations that reduce the enemy's capability to fight. Like the MTW, if engaged in an SSC, the military will provide the NCA with options to pursue U.S. interests. Our capability to carry out "shows of force", limited strikes, to enforce no-fly zones, and to enforce sanctions deters would be-aggressors and limits threats from rogue states.²⁰

The NMS directs the services to prepare for an uncertain future in which we cannot rely on current organizations and doctrine. A more responsive force will require better force

protection and more agile logistics. A primary concern for military leaders is the personnel that comprise the force. The CJSC directs that military personnel tempo be carefully managed for future operations and deployments.²¹

The NMS thus elaborates on the concepts of the QDR and NMS, showing how they will be implemented. The U.S. military must be able to react rapidly with sufficient firepower to quickly gain the initiative. Our national leadership expects our military to provide a deterrent force. Depending on the situation, our military must provide enough capability so that the leadership has credible options. In the MTW scenario the critical concept is the halt phase. The U.S. military must be able to halt an enemy short of his objective. Once the enemy is denied his objective, the NCA can decide on further courses of action.

JOINT VISION 2010 (JV 2010)

JV 2010 is a conceptual template for joint operations and future warfighting. It provides an azimuth for the services' visions.²² JV 2010 provides guidance for all of the services regarding the nature of future conflict. JV 2010 espouses the four future requirements: dominant maneuver, precision engagement, focused logistics, and full-dimension protection.

The Air Force is particularly interested in JV 2010's requirement for precision engagement. The Air Force will continue to be based largely in Continental United States (CONUS). We will thus rely on a power projection strategy. JV

2010 also specifies the need for agile organizations. The military of the future must respond to contingencies with less "start-up" time between deployment and employment.²³

These documents outline the strategic precepts of the U.S. Inherent in pursuing our objectives is the use of the military. Certain requirements and capabilities are highlighted in these documents. The Air Force is ideally suited to implementing such critical concepts as force projection. The Air Force is able to fulfill the requirements of the NCA, however, the new AEF structure will contribute significantly to the national strategy of shape, respond, and prepare.

WHAT IS THE AEF?

While the AEF is a relatively new concept, the expeditionary Air Force is not. In 1955 the Air Force created a composite air strike force to deploy to forward operating bases. During the 1960's the Air Force developed the concept of dual basing, in which fighter aircraft from CONUS would deploy (mostly to Europe) and begin operations. Inherent in the dual-basing concept was deployment to a known base. But the AEF is more flexible, more theater-centric. Dual-basing evolved in the 1970's into an exercise named Checkered Flag, which deployed primarily fighters from the United States to Europe to augment forces in the theater.²⁴ So throughout its history the Air Force has been expeditionary. However, as Gen. John Jumper stated, "when the Berlin Wall came down we lost a little edge in our ability to

rapidly deploy."²⁵ Recent events have prompted the Air Force to revisit the truly expeditionary Air Force concept.

The Cold War military was a forward deployed, fight in-place military. It operated from bases with a large infrastructure. However, with the end of the Cold War and the subsequent downsizing of the military, the US can no longer afford this substantial forward presence. The Air Force has accordingly transitioned from a large garrisoned force to one that is dramatically smaller and primarily CONUS based.

Contrary to what one would expect with the end of the Cold War (and the Desert Storm victory), the Air Force is now deployed more often than any other time in its history. Because of the draw down, the Air Force has one third less manpower. Yet contingency deployments have increased four fold.²⁶ Since Desert Shield, the USAF has maintained a continuous presence in the Middle East. In the past units were constantly deployed to augment or replace in-theater forces. However, the Air Force has recently been "yo-yoing" back and forth to the Middle East to insure that Iraq complies with United Nations sanctions.

The impetus for the AEF began in 1994 when the Air Force deployed 400 aircraft to the Persian Gulf.²⁷ Then Lt. Gen. John Jumper, Commander 9th AF began to formulate a plan to institutionalize the expeditionary nature of the force. He perceived a need to organize and train Air Force personnel to prepare for rapid deployment. Since the Air Force has drawn

down, the personnel tempo (PERSTEMPO) has dramatically increased. The high tempo of operations has caused tremendous instability for the personnel in the Air Force e.g. deploying often with little notice. The AEF is structured in part to stabilize current personnel issues.

The AEF thus represents both organizational change and institutional change in the Air Force culture. The AEF does not require more forces per se; it organizes current Air Force assets more efficiently. The AEF does not change the baseline organizational structure. The AEF's overarching mission is to provide warfighting capability to the theater CINC's. The AEF is structured to respond rapidly.

The AEF provides the capability to deploy from the United States to a bare bones forward operating base and conduct missions (combat or otherwise) within 48 hours of initial notification to deploy. The AEF can be tailored to the specific mission, such as humanitarian assistance or combat operations. Generally, the AEF will consist of strike, aerial refueling, air superiority, and theater airlift aircraft. If the AEF mission is more of a humanitarian operation, the aircraft will be tailored to reflect this mission, for example tactical airlift with some close air support aircraft. Depending on the specific mission, the AEF generally consists of 175 aircraft and approximately 1,000 personnel.²⁸

The Air Force plans to form 10 AEF's. These AEF's will be on call for 90 days at a time. A portion of or the entire AEF may deploy to a forward location. At any given time, two AEF's will be on call. The AEF's operate on a 15-month cycle. The normal AEF' cycle will begin with the designated units tasked for the upcoming AEF cycle.²⁹ At the beginning of the 15-month cycle, a core Wing will be identified; it will coordinate the activities of the various units in its AEF. These units will continue to conduct routine operations such as maintenance, training, exercises, and inspections. This newly formed AEF will then go through specialized training for the upcoming on call period. The new AEF will train together and accomplish pre-deployment tasks. When their turn comes in the cycle, the new AEF will then be placed on call for the 90-day cycle. During the on-call period, portions of the AEF may be tasked with various missions. In case of a crisis, the AEF will be on call for the CINC to deploy to his theater. During the 15-month AEF cycle, two AEF's are always on call. During the 15-month cycle, AEF's will be in various stages of preparedness, depending on the cycle they have been assigned. This cyclic structure should not to be confused with tiered readiness. AEF units' combat status will not automatically be downgraded because they are not on call. The Air Force will thus be able to meet the requirements of the two MTW scenario: an AEF may be employed initially in the theater; however, in the event of an MTW, the CINC's would apportion the

forces differently. After the AEF comes off the 90 day on call period, they will go through a stand down period (after action reports, leave for personnel etc.). After a short stand-down period the AEF enters the cycle anew.

HOW THE AEF SUPPORTS THE NCA

The AEF is structured to provide the NCA with a quick, responsive, and lethal force. The AEF supports the tenets of our national strategy, envisioning a future that is dynamic and changing. The AEF offers the preparedness and flexibility needed in times of uncertainty. This new concept enables the organization to adapt as the situation dictates. The AEF is specifically structured to be responsive to the NCA and give these decision-makers options across the spectrum of conflict.

AEF SUPPORT OF THE QDR

The QDR supports the tenets of the NSS. The 1997 QDR four military concepts: focused logistics, full dimension protection, dominant maneuver, and precision engagement. These concepts underlie the overall capabilities our military will use in the development of forces for implementation of our NMS.³⁰

The AEF was specifically developed to incorporate focused logistics in the employment of the expeditionary force. The AEF is structured to keep the logistics "tail" as small as possible. The AEF is also tailored for a specific operation to insure that there is no excess logistics incorporated into the deployment.

The host base will provide basic infrastructure such as water and fuel. The typical AEF will be able to deploy with as little as 60 C-141 equivalent loads.³¹ Much of the supplies and equipment for the arriving force have been pre-positioned from previous exercises or operations. The storage units for the equipment will be emptied. Then AEF personnel will live in these units during the initial phase of the operation. The AEF will depend on modern communications to insure that critical supplies are brought into the theater in a timely manner. Logistics will be kept to a bare minimum to insure that the AEF is able to deploy quickly.

The AEF is incorporating full dimension protection into its operations. The Air Force is particularly concerned with protecting its personnel while in the theater. The Air Force recently created the 820th Security Forces Group at Lackland AFB, Texas. Assigned force protection personnel will deploy with the AEF.³² These force protection personnel are specifically trained to protect the force while deployed. The AEF will be housed far from urban centers to lessen its visibility and decrease the terrorist threat.³³

Precision engagement is the cornerstone of the Air Force. Since Desert Storm, the Air Force has continued to develop Precision Guided Munitions (PGM's).³⁴ Using airpower and space based surveillance assets, the Air Force can find, fix, and destroy a target with a high probability of destruction. The

B-2's stealth capability enable the AEF to launch from the United States and deploy PGM's anywhere in the world in less than 18 hours.³⁵ The AEF is able locate and track, smaller more dispersed mobile forces. During Desert Storm, the average error in pinpointing scud launchers was about 10 miles; today that error has been reduced to one-half mile.³⁶ The AEF, with its precision guided munitions, can find, fix, and destroy any target.

Before a potential adversary commits hostilities the NCA can use the AEF in a deterrent role. Consider Operation Vigilant Warrior: after Desert Storm, the Air Force launched strikes along the border of Iraq to deter two Iraqi divisions from crossing into Kuwait.³⁷ The AEF is ideally suited for this kind of deterrent role. The NCA can also attempt to deter a would be adversary by using the AEF to communicate U.S. resolve. The AEF is an agile well-rounded combat force and has the same deterrence capability as a bigger, less agile force.³⁸ The AEF is a compromise between firepower and agility. With its ability to deploy quickly, the AEF is an efficient and effective tool for the CINC to signal US intent.

The deterrent capability of the AEF can be exercised in stages. Simply alerting the AEF may be enough to deter an adversary. Deploying the AEF into the theater would show the resolve of the United States. If the aforementioned measures fail, the AEF can attack the enemy. The AEF is particularly

effective in the deterrent role, because effective ultimately depends on the credibility of the deterrent force. The AEF can also be deployed to the theater in an additive role, such as joining the Army as an added capability in the theater. The AEF thus has tremendous deterrent capability, ranging from being put on alert to conducting actual air strikes.

The 1997 QDR charges the military with being able to fight two MTW's. The QDR asserts that the military must be able to defeat initial enemy advances short of their objectives. This interdiction strategy is also known as the halt phase. The Air Force postulates that the capability to rapidly halt the enemy specifically rests with the use of airpower. The halt phase is critical for two reasons. First, to prosecute two MTW's in close succession, we must be able to halt the enemy in two theaters. Second, the halt phase is critical because, if we are unable to halt the enemy, the subsequent campaign to evict the enemy from captured territory will be much more difficult, lengthy, and costly.³⁹ The Air Force embraces this new strategy. Traditionally the halt phase would be a precursor to the build up of ground forces. Rapid-response capabilities may render ground force build-up for the counter-offensive unnecessary.⁴⁰ Airpower can halt and fix the enemy in place, thereby denying his strategic and operational initiatives. It renders the enemy incapable of further action and substantially reduces the immediate threat.⁴¹ The rapid halt of the enemy would also deny

them the fait accompli for political bargaining.⁴² Rapid application of airpower could also deliver a serious psychological blow to the enemy, crippling their ability to maintain the offensive and their willingness to prosecute the attack further. Air Force doctrine states "the point of the 'decisive halt' is to force the enemy beyond their culminating point through the early and sustained overwhelming application of air and space power."⁴³ After the decisive halt, the enemy must reassess his objectives. He can remain in place and be subject to further attacks, or he can attempt to retreat to a safe haven. The decisive halt of the enemy should not be construed as a stalemate, because the enemy must make a decision on the disposition of his ground forces. Once the enemy is halted, the NCA enjoy a wider range of options. The NCA may decide to continue the attack in some form - perhaps to destroy the regime or to impose some form of punishment or sanctions. Should a counteroffensive be necessary, the build up would occur during the air campaign to halt the enemy.

Regarding the QDR construct of halting the enemy, the AEF is particularly suited for this role. The AEF can arrive quickly and be ready to fight almost immediately. After initial attacks, the AEF will be able to sustain the attack for as long as it takes.⁴⁴ Although the QDR first articulated the halt strategy, it is not a new strategy. During the battle of Khafji in the Gulf War, 1991, airpower halted the Iraqi armored advance.⁴⁵

However, the AEF's halt capabilities have yet to be tested. The National Defense Panel (NDP) did not include the halt phase in their report on the 1997 QDR. The Chairman of the NDP, Philip A. Odeen, "didn't feel [NDP] could endorse that particular approach because we don't think it has been demonstrated yet."⁴⁶ However, the Air Force Wargaming Institute at Maxwell Air Force Base has used the AEF for the halt phase in its wargame. The institute found that long range global attack is successful in the halt phase: it effectively blunts the enemy attack.⁴⁷

Of some concern, the tempo of Air Force operations has increased dramatically since the end of the Cold War. The Air Force is losing officers and enlisted personnel at an alarming rate.⁴⁸ The Annual Report to Congress declares that "pilot retention is an emerging readiness issue."⁴⁹ The Air Force is finding it increasingly difficult to retain critical personnel. A contributing factor accounting for why large numbers of personnel are separating from the Air Force is the PERSTEMPO. To mitigate this problem, AEF will give the service members a more predictable schedule. They will know when they will be on call and when they will most likely be deployed.⁵⁰ Not only are deployments a hardship for those that deploy, but they also create hardships for the personnel that are left behind to support the on-going activities. When a unit deploys, the routine jobs do not get done. Remaining members are often tasked with significant additional duties. As the Air Force

restructures under the AEF concept, the Air Force is requesting 5,000 additional personnel to fill support roles. Contractors and the shifting of airmen into career fields that deploy most often should fill the new positions. These new positions will be spread across 29 bases.⁵¹ The NMS states that PERSTEMPO is a critical area that must be addressed by the services. With the AEF concept, the Air Force will attempt to alleviate some of the personnel turbulence by providing greater predictability for deployments.

AEF AND JV 2010

The AEF fulfills a basic premise of JV 2010. The Air Force is particularly adept at precision engagement. Precision engagement means bombs find their target with greater certainty, in the context of humanitarian operations, precision engagement means relief supplies arrive in good condition at the right place, at the right time. In the broader context, precision engagement refers to the effective use of resources. The Air Force is the only service that can project precision engagement anywhere in the world on short notice.

The Air Force is reorienting. With the introduction of the strategy of halting the enemy, the USAF has moved to the strategic forefront. Using the AEF, the Air Force can project power anywhere in the world on short notice. Consistent with JV 2010, the Air Force concurs that an early-arriving, small, agile force can have as much effect as a later arriving bigger force.

With its host of precision weapons, the Air Force can conduct parallel warfare-- that is they can hit multiple targets simultaneously (as opposed to sequentially). Parallel warfare allows the Air Force to attack key strategic targets simultaneously and paralyze the enemy.⁵² The Air Force is thus redefining itself. Under the aegis of the AEF, the Air Force is positioning itself as a strategic force (as opposed to the old role of deliverer of services).⁵³

The AEF is thus starting to change Air Force doctrine. This new doctrine (it has been posited that the AEF is a culture change as well as a doctrinal change) emphasizes speed and lethality. The AEF adheres to the premise called for by JV 2010. The force of the future must be able to respond from start-up to combat operations in ever-quicker cycles. The start-up time for the AEF is 48 hours from notification to bombs on target. In the future, with superior intelligence, the AEF will have more notice and be able to respond quicker with a force that can thwart the enemy from achieving their goals. The AEF can quickly and precisely get into the enemy's decision cycle (predicated on superior intelligence). With its precision weapons and intelligence the AEF, can disrupt the enemy's awareness of the situation and deny his ability to control his forces (a key aspect of the decisive halt).⁵⁴ The Air Force is thus reshaping itself into an expeditionary force that supports the tenets of JV 2010.

CONCLUSION

The Air Force is undergoing both structural and doctrinal changes. Inherent with the emergent AEF concept, is a reevaluation of Air Force doctrine. The Air Force has always been an expeditionary force. But it was not until the recent advent of the AEF that the expeditionary concept was codified. The AEF is structured so that it can rapidly deploy anywhere in the world, either to deter or prosecute a potential adversary. It is hard to envision a contemporary scenario where some form of airpower would not be employed--that is, where some form of the AEF would not be in demand for some part of the military operation. The AEF will have at its disposal precision weapons. With the AEF, the NCA has an option for deterrence that did not exist in the recent past.

The QDR implicitly tasks the Air Force to conduct the halt phase of a conflict. The USAF has taken up the banner and has developed the AEF. It is light enough to deploy quickly, yet lethal enough to effect a decisive halt. With its intelligence and weapon resources, the AEF will be able to disrupt the enemy and halt them in place. The new AEF concept of rapid deployment, in conjunction with precision weapons, is prompting the Air Force to reevaluate its doctrine. The AEF can destroy multiple strategic targets simultaneously, which may determine how the Air Force is employed in the future. The Air Force is developing the capability and doctrine to justify its use unilaterally. The

CINC has at his disposal a dynamic strategic force for the new century.

Although the MTW scenario is unlikely, the Air Force is prepared to respond with an AEF. Or, it can revert to current doctrine. In the future, the AEF will probably be tasked primarily with MOOTW missions. Because of the emergence of the MOOTW mission, the Air Force has structured the AEF for such missions.

Like the other services, for the foreseeable future the Air Force is coping with a relatively static budget. The AEF will allow the USAF to more efficiently manage available resources. AEF will help alleviate PERSTEMPO problem, which should ameliorate the retention problem in the Air Force.

The Air Force follows the guidance articulated by the NCA, Secretary of Defense, and CJSC. With the AEF, the Air Force has developed a concept that enhances the capabilities called for by the stewards of the Air Force. The AEF has been designed to give the NCA more options to pursue U.S. interests. The AEF is a new concept that supports the CINCs' wartime requirements. The AEF gives the NCA an on-call "911" capability.⁵⁵

WORD COUNT = 5617

ENDNOTES

¹ The AEF is also known as Expeditionary Aerospace Force (EAF). The terms are interchangeable. Airpower also includes space-based assets. Airpower is used instead of aerospace power because the author agrees with Philip Melinger, who finds the term aerospace, "inelegant".

² The White House, A National Security Strategy for A New Century, The White House, 2.

³ Ibid., 15.

⁴ Ibid., 21.

⁵ Ibid., 22.

⁶ With the recent budget surplus there is an effort in congress to increase funding of the military. However, at this point there has not been a substantial change in funding.

⁷ Secretary of Defense, Report of the Quadrennial Defense Review, May 1997, IV.

⁸ Ibid., IV.

⁹ Ibid., 5.

¹⁰ Ibid., 10.

¹¹ Ibid., 11.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid., 16.

¹⁴ Ibid., 35. It should be noted that the AEF is mentioned only twice in the QDR, under logistics page 41 and battlelabs on page 42.

¹⁵ Ibid., 16.

¹⁶ Ibid., 22.

¹⁷ Ibid., 68.

¹⁸ Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, "National Military Strategy of the United States of America 1997," available from <<http://www.dtic.mil/jcs/nms/executiv.htm>>, Internet; accessed 1 January 1999.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid. PERSTEMPO as defined is how often the personnel are deployed. Optimally personnel should not be deployed more than 120 days per year. OPSTEMPO is what drives the PERSTEMPO. The high OPSTEMPO combined with less manpower causes the high PERSTEMPO.

²² Ibid.

²³ Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Vision 2010, (Washington, D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office, 1996), 31.

²⁴ Brian E. Wages, Col., (Ret), "The First with the Most: USAF's Air Expeditionary Force Takes the Offensive on Power Projection," Armed Forces Journal (September 1996): 66.

²⁵ David Fulghum, "USAF's Future Is on The Road," Aviation Week & Space Technology, 15 September 1997, 74.

²⁶Sandra I. Erwin, "Air Force Realignment Aimed at Boosting Retention, Moral," National Defense, (October 1998): 23.

²⁷Wages, 66.

²⁸William R. Looney III, "The Air Expeditionary Force," Airpower Journal, (Winter 1996): 4.

²⁹These units will be dispersed throughout the Air Force i.e. there is no need to be in geographic proximity. The Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard will be incorporated into the AEF. At this time the exact structure and wording has not been worked out.

³⁰The AEF concept is not delineated in the QDR.

³¹Looney, 3.

³²Otto Kreisher, "To Protect the Force," Air Force Magazine, November 1998, 34. The Air Force has trained security personnel to put emphasis on protecting the AEF. Equipment has been upgraded e.g. armored vehicles and night imaging equipment. The Air Force has also created a Force Protection Battlelab to test and implement new force protection measures.

³³Fulghum, 74.

³⁴"USAF Almanac," Air Force Magazine, May 1998, 158. The GPS-Aided Munitions (GAM) has "near precision" capability.

³⁵John A. Tirpak, "The Long Reach of On-Call Airpower," Air Force Magazine, December 1998, 22. This capability has been demonstrated with global projection exercises. The B-2 and B-52 will generally not deploy with the AEF, they will be held back in the CONUS. These are strategic assets that would not ordinarily come under the command of the CINC.

³⁶Fulghum, 75.

³⁷John T. Correll, "On Course for Global Engagement," Air Force Magazine, January 1999, 25.

³⁸Wages, 66.

³⁹Secretary of Defense, 13.

⁴⁰Elaine M. Grossman, "Duel of Doctrines," Air Force Magazine, December 1998, 31. Maj. Gen. Charles Link goes so far as to say that the use of the Air Force is more effective and ethical, saving lives on both sides.

⁴¹Correll, 24.

⁴²Secretary of Defense, Annual Report to the President and the Congress, (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1998), 137.

⁴³Secretary of the Air Force, Air Force Basic Doctrine: Air Force Doctrine Document 1, (September 1997), 42.

⁴⁴Tirpak, 22.

⁴⁵Correll, 26.

⁴⁶Grossman, 33. For another discussion on why the halt phase was left out of the NDP see Correll, page 25. He states that the halt phase is largely missing from the NDP because the Army maneuver advocates opposed giving the Air Force too much of a role.

⁴⁷Global Engagement 98 (GE 98) Quick Look, From: HQ AU/CC, To: HQ USAF/CC

DTG 241703Z Nov 98. This was a no warning scenario in which the AEF was tasked to halt a simulated enemy force in Azerbaijan. The AEF in this scenario rapidly deployed and used long range precision strikes. This effectively halted the enemy. However, the extensive use of tanker support slowed the closure of other deploying forces.

⁴⁸Secretary of Defense, Annual Report to the President and the Congress, 215. First-term reenlistments are down 3 percentage points from 1996, while second term reenlistments are down 5 percentage points from 1996. Pilot retention rate declined 6 percentage points in 1997.

⁴⁹Report of the National Defense Panel, Transforming National Defense: National Security in the 21st Century, (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, December 1997), 97.

⁵⁰This only applies to the AEF. If there were an MTW or other national emergency the Air Force would revert to current doctrine and deploy those forces necessary.

⁵¹Erwin, 22.

⁵²Robert P.Haffa, Col., "Wake-Up Call: What the Air Force Study On- Long Range Planning Should Conclude," Armed Forces Journal, (September 1996): 54.

⁵³The Air Force is moving away from the concept of simply supporting the Army. The Air Force is not simply another portion of the Army's maneuver force. This comes back to the old debate of needing "boots on the ground" to secure victory. The NCA's must decide what constitutes victory. The Air Force certainly cannot occupy territory or "secure" victory like the Army, however with the precision parallel warfare the Air Force can simultaneously destroy multiple strategic targets in a country. Destroying strategic targets would seriously hamper an adversaries ability to conduct "modern" warfare.

⁵⁴An interesting paradox is beginning to emerge. The military is able to respond to a crisis anywhere in the world on very short notice. This ability to respond may out run the abilities of the NCA's decision process. The NCA needs time to garner political support for the operation, notify allies, make decisions etc. The AEF is developed to give the NCA more options, which could cause too many options, to be presented, too quickly. The military may respond to a potential crisis faster than the NCA can make decisions on the best use of the force. A lag in the decision to use the force could cause the US military to lose the edge a light rapid responding force would require.

⁵⁵The "911" term is used quite often when referring to the AEF, however its origin could not be traced.

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